

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 11, 2006. Claims 1 to 26 remain in the application. Claims 1, 12, 13, 14, 15, 24, 25 and 26 are the independent claims. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Before turning to the substantive merits of the Office Action, two procedural matters are addressed.

First, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner acknowledge the claim to foreign priority, made pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 119. A certified copy of the priority document was filed on August 6, 2001. The Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge the claim to priority, and also to acknowledge receipt of the certified copy of the priority document.

Second, Applicants have not yet received an initialed Form PTO-1449 from the August 6, 2001 Information Disclosure Statement indicating that the art cited therein has been considered. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner initial the Form PTO-1449 to indicate that the art cited in the foregoing Information Disclosure Statement has been considered, and that the Examiner return a copy of the initialed form to Applicants with the next communication.

Turning to the substantive merits of the Office Action, the title was objected to as allegedly being non-descriptive. In this regard, without conceding the correctness of the objection, and solely in an effort to advance prosecution, a new title has been selected. Withdrawal of this objection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 7, 15 and 24 were objected to for informalities. In this regard, it is assumed that the objection to "Claim 7, line 23" was intended to be an objection to

Claim 8, as line 23 of the page in the application containing Claim 7 actually falls within Claim 8. Without conceding the correctness of the objections, Claims 7, 8, 15 and 24 have been amended giving due regard to the objections raised in the Office Action. However, the objection to Claim 1 is respectfully traversed. In this regard, the Office Action required that all dependent claims after Claim 1 refer to "The expendable supplies providing method" instead of "An expendable supplies providing method." Applicants respectfully submit that there is no requirement that dependent claims be in this form, and further submit that the language used in these claims is similar to that suggested by the MPEP itself. Sec MPEP § 608.01(n). Withdrawal of these objections is therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 for allegedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Without conceding the correctness of the rejection, Claim 13 has been amended so as to clearly recite statutory subject matter. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 12, 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for alleged indefiniteness. Specifically, the Office Action alleged that including the phrase "the same" in these claims rendered the scope of the claims unascertainable. Without conceding the correctness of the rejection, and solely in an effort to advance prosecution, these claims have been amended so as to further clarify the scope of the invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,690,481 (Yeung). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 12, 13 and 14

The invention of Claims 1, 12, 13 and 14 generally concerns providing a client user with expendable supplies. Among its many features, the invention of Claims 1, 12, 13 and 14 includes (i) updating a print point of a user client who prints advertisement information in response to print output of distribution information being performed in the print apparatus of the client user, and (ii) determining whether or not expendable supplies should be provided for the client user according to the print point.

Referring specifically to claim language, independent Claim 1 as amended is directed to an expendable supplies providing method for providing a client user who prints advertisement information with expendable supplies used in print processing. The method includes an advertisement management step for managing advertisement information, a distribution step for generating distribution information based on the advertisement information to distribute the distribution information in order to print the distribution information, an update step for updating a print point of the client user who prints the advertisement information in response to print output of the distribution information being performed in print apparatus of the client user, and a determination step for determining whether or not expendable supplies should be provided for the client user according to the print point.

Independent Claims 12, 13 and 14 are directed to an apparatus, a program and a storage medium, respectively, substantially in accordance with the method of Claim 1.

The applied art, namely Yeung, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of the invention of Claims 1, 12, 13 and 14, and in particular is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of (i) updating a print point of a user client who prints

advertisement information in response to print output of distribution information being performed in the print apparatus of the client user, and (ii) determining whether or not expendable supplies should be provided for the client user according to the print point.

As understood by Applicants, Yeung discloses push printing from internet sources to a set top box through a cable head end connected to the set top box by a digital cable network. The push printing includes unicast (point-to-point) printing, multicast (one-to-many) printing, and one-to group printing. Both unicast and multicast printing are accomplished from the remote internet site to a cable head end connected to the internet, with the cable head end transmitting the print job via a digital cable network to subscriber set top boxes. Notification of print status is provided from the set top box back to the cable head end, thereby allowing the cable head end to provide notification of successful printout back to the remote internet site. (See Yeung, Abstract).

Pages 8, 11 and 12 of the Office Action appear to equate Yeung's "preferences directory 21" with a "print point file". Applicants respectfully disagree with this characterization of Yeung, and submit that the cited portions of Yeung are not seen to disclose or to suggest a print point. In fact, Yeung is not seen to disclose a print point in any of the portions cited by the Office Action, much less updating a print point of a user client who prints advertisement information in response to print output of distribution information being performed in the print apparatus of the client user.

Page 10 of the Office Action asserts that Yeung (Column 12, lines 12 to 25) discloses storing a received confirmation in a print point file. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that Yeung's cable head end builds a notification server so as to await notification of printout from each of the set top boxes to which data has been transmitted,

which allegedly is then stored "at least in RAM or in a print point file or database file related to the head end server."

However, the cited portions of Yeung do not disclose a print point file, and furthermore do not disclose storing anything "at least in RAM or in a print point file or database file related to the head end server." The cited portions disclose that the cable head end builds a notification server so as to await notification of printout from each of the set top boxes to which data has been transmitted, but do not disclose the additional characteristics stated in the Office Action. While the notification server may receive notification of a particular print job's status from the set top boxes, the cited portions of Yeung are not seen to disclose that any information is stored in a print point file, or that a print point file even exists.

Accordingly, Yeung is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of updating a print point of a user client who prints advertisement information in response to print output of distribution information being performed in the print apparatus of the client user.

As Yeung is not seen to disclose or to suggest updating a print point of a user, Yeung is also not seen to disclose or to suggest the additional feature of determining whether or not expendable supplies should be provided for the client user according to the print point.

Accordingly, independent Claims 1, 12, 13 and 14 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully request same.

Claims 15, 24, 25 and 26

The invention of Claims 15, 24, 25 and 26 also generally concerns providing a client user with expendable supplies. Among its many features, the invention

of Claims 15, 24, 25 and 26 includes (i) obtaining a print point, corresponding to an identified client user, accumulated in response to a print output of distribution information based on advertisement information, and (ii) reading an expendable supplies list indicating a plurality of kinds of expendable supplies and a consumption point required for providing each item of expendable supplies to generate expendable supplies provision information, including the expendable supplies list and the obtained print point.

Referring specifically to claim language, independent Claim 15 as amended is directed to an expendable supplies providing method for generating expendable supplies provision information with which expendable supplies to be distributed to a client user are designated. The method includes an identification step for identifying a client user whose access is received via the Internet, an obtaining step for obtaining a print point, which corresponds to the identified client user, accumulated in response to a print output of distribution information based on advertisement information, a step for reading an expendable supplies list indicating a plurality of kinds of expendable supplies and a consumption point required for providing each item of expendable supplies to generate, in HTML format, expendable supplies provision information including the expendable supplies list and the obtained print point, and a transmission step for transmitting the generated expendable item provision information to the client user via the Internet.

Independent Claims 24, 25 and 26 are directed to an apparatus, a program, and a storage medium, respectively, substantially in accordance with the method of Claim 15.

The applied art, namely Yeung, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of the invention of Claims 15, 24, 25 and 26, and in particular is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of (i) obtaining a print point, corresponding to an

identified client user, accumulated in response to a print output of distribution information based on advertisement information, and (ii) reading an expendable supplies list indicating a plurality of kinds of expendable supplies and a consumption point required for providing each item of expendable supplies to generate expendable supplies provision information, including the expendable supplies list and the obtained print point.

In particular, as discussed above, the portions of Yeung cited by the Office Action are not seen to disclose or to suggest a print point or a print point file. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Yeung is also not seen to disclose or to suggest obtaining a print point, corresponding to an identified client user, accumulated in response to a print output of distribution information based on advertisement information.

As such, Yeung is not seen to disclose or to suggest the additional feature of reading an expendable supplies list indicating a plurality of kinds of expendable supplies and a consumption point required for providing each item of expendable supplies to generate expendable supplies provision information, including the expendable supplies list and the obtained print point.

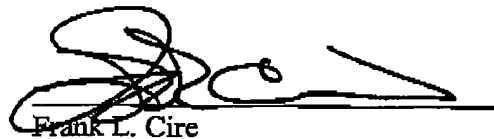
Accordingly, independent Claims 15, 24, 25 and 26 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully request same.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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